

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 490

September 12, 2003

Members Present

Elizabeth Spaugh
Valeri Lane
Sue Allen
Sheryl Taylor
Lisa Robbins

Joan Harter
Pam Byars
Sherry Hailey
Anne Marie Wells
Gretchen Schmitz

Rick Horrell
Leslie Elpers
Melodie Friedebach
Jodi Arnold

DESE Staff Present

Debby Parsons
Bill Connelly
Karen Allan

Mary Corey
Angie Nickell
Joyce Jackman

Dale Carlson
Pam Williams

Members Not Present

Vicki Walker

Margaret Franklin

Tracey King

Call to Order and Welcome

Elizabeth Spaugh called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions were made. A reminder was made to remove food and drink items when leaving the meeting room.

Approval of July SICC Minutes

- Under the "Funding" section changes were made to the paragraph referring to assistive technology and to the paragraph regarding training coordination project.
- Add page numbers.
- Under "Members Not Present" correct Pam Byars name – was listed as Paula.
- Under "Old Business" change DOH to DHSS.
- Under "Other Provider Issues" add information that audiologists bill by procedure not in quarter hour increments.

Leslie Elpers made a motion to approve the minutes with the above corrections. Anne Marie seconded. Motion passed.

First Steps Budget/Finance Update (Dale Carlson and Joyce Jackman) – (FY 04 and 05 Budget Projections handout). Dale discussed with the Council the information contained in the handout.

Valeri Lane indicated it would be interesting to see what the cost per child prior to Redesign is compared to the current cost per child. It was also suggested to compare Missouri data to that of other states but that would be difficult due to differences in eligibility criteria. DESE could contact NECTAC to find states with similar eligibility criteria.

DESE is currently operating under the FY 04 budget. DESE has determined that funding for the current fiscal year will be significantly short and that a supplemental request of \$8 million dollars will be needed. The reason for this is that the FY 04 budget was based on estimates of higher Medicaid receipts than what is actually being received. It will be mid to late spring before DESE finds out if the supplemental is approved. DESE could run into some cash flow problems for the last few months of the current fiscal year. Part B funds are used to pay for administrative services (staff time used in working with Part C).

Sherry Hailey asked if parents could be required to participate in Medicaid. Melodie suggested that service coordinators be asked to strongly encourage parents to participate in Medicaid. Actually, anyone working with First Steps children needs to be making this suggestion to parents. It was also suggested that DESE contact Department of Social Services and ask that they inform parents of this as well.

The First Steps program is an optional program created by a Missouri Executive Order and is not mandated by the federal government. Other states are having similar issues.

Medicaid Participation and Enrollment (two handouts) - Joyce Jackman discussed her two handouts with the Council.

Valeri Lane requested a report that lists the average cost per child by SPOE region (direct services). The number of providers per region could make a difference in the average costs. She wanted to know if there was information that indicates if the parent(s) are present when the child is receiving services. She also pointed out that even by identifying more Medicaid eligible children and having them added to the program, this will not be enough to cover the shortfall of money needed for the current fiscal year. But the more we can tell the legislature that we have done to try and close the gap, will hopefully help show that we have been proactive.

Family Cost Participation (handout) – Dale Carlson indicated that this is an initial discussion on this topic. It has been done in other states. As DESE looks at maximizing dollars and a possible shortfall, they need to begin looking at this option.

When insurance is being billed, in most cases they are declining payment. If the insurance company does cover the cost but later notices that they have been billed for these services over a period of time, they may then deny payment because it is considered long term.

Valeri Lane felt that since there are a lot of issues with family cost participation, that possibly a subcommittee or someone at DESE should review and define the issues.

It was also suggested that the Family Cost Participation Study should have a summary or highlight areas of importance before it is distributed further.

Debby Parsons indicated that as part of the improvement plan, OSEP is trying to determine what other funding resources are available to states to help fund the First Steps program.

Melodie Friedebach suggested that a subcommittee (email group) be created to assist DESE in the review and writing of some legislative language regarding Family Cost Participation. Contact Dale Carlson or Joyce Jackman with concerns or comments.

Valeri Lane felt that she was not sure that all of the issues have even been identified before drafting legislative changes. Melodie indicated that this would have to happen very soon! She does not want to go to the legislature and ask for \$8 million dollars without showing that DESE is doing something legislatively. Melodie indicated that we have told the legislature that the Redesign program would cost less and now we need a supplemental (even though we are serving more children). Melodie felt that state agencies could assist the Division in making the legislative language changes and that SICC/stakeholders could assist in the review of the Family Cost Participation options.

Leslie Elpers indicated that when she was a part of the Redesign program, it was felt that the cost savings might not be seen for a few years. Phase 2 was just implemented last April.

Sherry Hailey suggested that in addition to reviewing the Family Cost Participation that the issues remaining from the original Redesign Task Force need to also be reviewed.

Debby Parsons offered to have DESE staff outline what they heard at this meeting and then put together some possible proposals and present to the Council at the next meeting.

The SICC is supportive of crafting legislation as long as there is a parallel plan to look at cost containment. DESE can draft some options to begin to look at both pieces. Melodie suggested the following state agencies and contacts: Gretchen Schmitz with Department of Insurance; MC+; Health; Elizabeth Spaugh; and, Lisa Robbins.

Volunteers for a subcommittee to work with Dale Carlson (set a date in mid-October) include: Sherry Hailey; Joan Harter; Sue Allen; Rick Horrell; Terry Glassner; and, Valeri Lane. Could use email to send some preliminary information.

Status of Current Contracts

SPOE Contracts for Phase I – SPOE surveys have gone out and have been returned. Reviewing data.

Facilitator Contracts – Joyce Jackman indicated that DESE is designing the request for proposal (RFP) - mid to late October. The Training Network contract will end in early February and will have to be rebid - RFP is being developed.

Changes to System Software – The decision was made to hold on a few of the changes because of the cost. September 20 will have four changes coming

- Primary referral resource list –cut the list down to coincide with regulations.
- Source of information field will be removed (inactivation reasons – currently assume that the child had an IFSP but some referrals are not eligible for the program).
- Some of the short descriptions in the software will be changed slightly to be more descriptive.
- Primary setting for the IFSP was not a required field and since it is a federal reporting item for DESE it will become a required field.

Some of the changes that are on hold include:

- Reasons for referrals going over 45 days.
- Area of delay they qualified under.
- Add in a “no provider available” option.

Provider Matrix - Joyce Jackman indicated to the Council that DESE will be sending a First Steps listserve message in the near future that will contain information and procedures that will apply to all First Steps providers enrolled with the CFO.

The message will include information regarding enrollment procedures. Exceptions will no longer be accepted by DESE after August 1, 2003, unless a SPOE region can document the unavailability of personnel meeting the educational qualifications. The message will also include information regarding training and renewal requirements. Information regarding the matrix: reviewing and updating provider information must be done on a regular basis, information regarding provider availability, and that an email address will be required for each provider. Once the email is sent, this information will be posted on DESE’s website at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/index.htm>.

Training/Orientation Module – Karen Allan indicated that DESE is working on having the orientation module available via video streaming. She indicated that technical questions about problems viewing the video on the web should be directed to Wayne Goddard at DESE at wayne.goddard@dese.mo.gov.

Problems and/or concerns regarding the matrix (specific provider enrollment questions), should be sent to the DESE web reply webrepliespefs@dese.mo.gov. An issue was raised that there have been messages sent to the Central Finance Office (CFO) with no response ever received. Answers to questions sent in via the web replies can be sent out via the First Steps listserve. Also by having the email address of every provider, it will

be much easier to send out information. Watch for updates to the frequently asked questions section on the First Steps web page. Billing and authorization questions and answers are now on the web.

Karen Jacobi suggested that DESE communicate to the SPOEs when there are problems with the computer system. Also, if the SPOEs notice problems with the system, they should contact the CFO.

A suggestion was made that a First Steps list serve message needs to go out giving a simple explanation of the training process that providers have to go through.

An issue was raised about the ending date for a child's IFSP services if they are receiving compensatory services. At this time those children are kept active on the system. If you have questions about a particular situation, contact the help desk at the CFO. DESE is very aware of the problem and is working on a "fix."

Reimbursement for Interpreters – Joyce Jackman indicated that there have been some issues regarding interpreters. If a bilingual interpreter is needed to contact the parent for an evaluation meeting, consideration must be given to the number of units necessary to complete the particular activity. The amount of time for the phone call must be included with the amount of time for the evaluation meeting.

Audiologists/Hearing Aids – Joyce Jackman indicated that the CFO was not aware that Medicaid handled the hearing program. Are using the Medicaid system and adopting specific early intervention codes for special audiological assessment. Medicaid has fixed amounts for certain services. DESE will define that in the listing of EI services. Each will have a separate code (episode payment not a unit payment). This has to be in place by October 15 because it is tied to electronic billing and HIPPA. After October 15, if a provider bills under a certain code, they cannot bill under a different code. Services for a non-Medicaid child will be the same as Medicaid eligible children.

Provider Qualifications – Debby Parsons indicated that DESE has had a huge increase in phone calls for exceptions to become providers. There are some that have not completed the module trainings and others not quite qualifying under the educational background. Do some of the qualifications need to be broadened? DESE is proposing some changes to the personnel standards and have posted on our website for public comments (service coordinator, special instructor, speech/language). The Part C personnel chart was "cleaned up" to better provide a description of the responsibilities of these individuals. Requirements from MCDHH will also be added regarding interpreters.

DESE will be sending out a memo soon that will discuss the general enrollment procedures for providers. DESE will also be making the orientation module more accessible and will give providers a reasonable amount of time to have the training completed by. DESE has a limited authority to grant exceptions – such as if the SPOE has made a good faith effort to recruit individuals and there is no one available (needs to be tied to a shortage issue). DESE is looking at the issue of renewal requirements (will put on hold until 2005.) The issue with this is that DESE (in the fall of 2004) would like to provide better guidance on how to get the credentialing. Providers need to keep copies of employment and trainings/courses taken. Debby indicated that this memo would be sent to providers, First Steps list serve, etc.

A comment was made that there are concerns with the First Steps system that DESE is not finding out about. The recent survey completed by the SPOEs and providers was one step but there needs to be more done in the way of getting this information/concerns to DESE. Debby mentioned that a SPOE directors' meeting would be scheduled during October. Valeri Lane felt that there needed to be a process for reviewing stakeholder concerns.

A motion was made by Lisa Robbins to ask that DESE form a committee to identify issues related to oversight of providers, service coordinators, SPOEs, and some suggested solutions. Further discussion indicate that the first meeting should be a small group discussion to define the issues of oversight and set up a plan to elicit comments with the focus on SPOEs, service coordinators and facilitators. Regional forums could also be used to give people a venue of expressing concerns or comments. Motion was passed.

Volunteers wanting to serve on this committee were asked to contact Debby Parsons by the end of next week.

First Steps Facilitator Reports (handout) - Karen Jacobi indicated that the facilitators were asked to get input from the SPOEs. The handout identified provider recruitment/enrollment issues by county. Child Find is increasing but there are not enough providers available. There is a huge discrepancy in the matrix information and what is actually happening with the providers and where they are available. Intake coordinators spend a lot of time looking for a provider only to find out that they will not serve or provide a particular service. There is a sense that there are a lot of providers available even though there are not. There are just no more people to recruit. Will have to brainstorm a different approach for provider recruitment. Could target providers who do not specialize in First Steps (early Head Start, PAT). The enrollment system also needs to be more user friendly. Speech/language pathologists were willing to take on families during summer but not after school starts back. Very few associates are enrolled – could be a good resource. Also, when a provider inactivates their account, there needs to be a way of finding out why.

Improvement Plan – Debby Parsons indicated that the Improvement Plan had previously been distributed to Council members. The Data Section is working to get this information/timelines into the project management software. Moving forward with the activities from the improvement plan: monitoring, Child Find issues, data reports, First Steps data, and provider issues.

Missouri was selected in a lottery process to participate in a visit from OSEP to review our data (week of December 8). OSEP will be reviewing the data system and several other items. There will be a conference call between OSEP and representatives from the SICC (will include those who worked on the CIMP plan). The improvement plan is on the Division's website.

Monitoring and Compliance Update (handout) – Pam Williams gave an overview of where the Compliance Section is in the process of developing a monitoring system for Part C (SPOEs, service coordinators, and providers and what they are responsible for, and how to monitor for compliance). With OSEP visiting in December, the Division needed to have more information available for them regarding this process.

A question was asked about family-centered services and how they would be monitored. Ms. Williams indicated that was one of the areas where monitoring procedures had not been identified at this time. Pam will report more information about this process at the January SICC meeting.

LICCs-First Steps Facilitators - LICC reports were presented to the Council from Karen Jacobi (NW area), Sarah Parker (SE area), Harriet Foiles (NE area), and Becky Taggart (SW area). The LICC regional reports are posted on DESE's webpage at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/LICRegionpg.html>.

A suggestion was made that the facilitators could email DESE a week or two prior to each SICC meeting with the issues/concerns from their areas. This would give DESE an opportunity to consolidate a list, review, and have responses available or discuss at the meeting.

Debby Parsons indicated that when the LICCs have issues or questions they need to be contacting the CFO and/or DESE right away instead of waiting for the next SICC meeting to have the issue raised/discussed at the next SICC meeting. DESE could bring the CFO call logs to next meeting.

Harriett Foiles indicated that there are some problems with the 800 number. Some people say they are not able to get through or say that it never works. There is also confusion because the number is answered "Special Education." There was a suggestion that the voice mail message needs to mention First Steps. She also wanted to know the status of getting the rest of the prefixes entered for Phase II SPOEs for the 800 number.

New Business – Sherry Hailey would like to add an item to the agenda – setting up a network with providers to discuss common problems (billing, etc.)

Another suggestion for the next meeting would be to have someone from the CFO present.

Sherry Hailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m. Anne Marie seconded. Motion passed.